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Mexico's Cuban Connection

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Mexico's Cuban connection: An exception or example of the United states' ardent anti-communism

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Introduction

The "fundamental design" of the international communist movement and the goal of Soviet leaders, according to George Kennan in NSC-68, was " to retain and solidify their absolute power" through "the dynamic extension of their authority" and "the complete subversion or forcible destruction of the machinery of government and structure of society in the countries of the non-Soviet world."[1] Such strategy threatened the power of the United States; consequently, Washington policy makers believed they had to exercise whatever extent of economic, political, or military influence necessary to counter the communist expansion inherently tied to the USSR. This belief lay at the core of the United States' foreign policy for decades - from the execution of the Marshall Plan to involvement in the Vietnam War, Washington bureaucrats willingly intervened in the domestic affairs of other nations in the name of halting the infectious spread of communism.

Mexico, notwithstanding the close bond it shared with the dominant anticommunist power, endorsed an outlook almost antithetical to that of the United States. During the Cold War, Mexico maintained its adherence to the Estrada Doctrine. First established by Foreign Minister Genaro Estrada in 1930, the doctrine advocated for each country's right to self-determination and emphasized the importance of nonintervention. This doctrine, alongside a concern for its own independence, informed Mexico's insistence on the inclusion of noninterventionist principles in the Charter for the Organization of American States

(OAS) and its willingness to interact with communist countries.[2]

The world views of the United States and Mexico collided when Fidel Castro successfully led the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and established the first openly socialist state in Latin America. The United States, after identifying the communist threat on its doorstep, responded swiftly and sought to lead the Western Hemisphere's response, serving as an example for the other Latin American countries to follow. After imposing its own sanctions on Cuba, American delegates to the OAS attempted to persuade Latin American member nations to act as anticommunist crusaders and chastise Cuba with harsh economic and political retaliations. In their view, OAS members had to recognize the existing expansionist threat of communists and cease relations with Cuba to prevent its efforts to spark revolutions in other countries. While the American delegates could not achieve their ultimate goal of having the OAS swiftly assail Cuba, they succeeded in forcing them to impose sanctions against the island at the Ninth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in 1964. The resolution of this meeting concluded that Cuba had sponsored "terrorism, sabotage, assault, and guerilla warfare" in Venezuela.[3] More importantly, it resolved that in accordance with Articles 6 and 8 of the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance "the governments of the American states [should] not maintain diplomatic or consular relations with the Government of Cuba" and required that they suspend all their trade and sea transportation with Cuba. [4]

Mexico, defying the expectations of the Washington delegation, "steadfastly opposed any obligatory sanctions against Cuba" on behalf of the OAS even before the conference began.[5] Even after Chile, Bolivia, Uruguay and Brazil (the last OAS members to hold out on severing relations with Cuba) adopted the resolution, Mexico still refused to follow suit. Instead, it chose to maintain economic and political interaction with the island.[6] Because of this, Mexico transformed into a "window" from the mainland Americas into Cuba and served

as the only entry point into the island from the Western Hemisphere.[7] Mexico's decision to retain its relationship with Cuba posed a threat to the anticommunist agenda of the United States on primarily two fronts: firstly, in Mexico's domestic arena and secondly, in the Western Hemisphere. Cuba, through its consistent contact with Mexico, could catalyze a communist uprising in the country, or use it as a base to export Cuban subversives to spark insurgencies in neighboring Latin American nations. Considering the United States' determination to suppress any communist entity, the significance of Cuba as the only socialist nation which penetrated the anticommunist sanctuary that the U.S. had sought to establish in the Western Hemisphere, and the geographical proximity of Mexico, the predictable course of action for the United States would have been to explosively retaliate against its neighbor. Despite all of this, the United States government did not punish Mexico in any way. The relationship between Mexico and the United States during this time suffered no significant harm and continued cordially.[8] Why then, did the staunchest advocate of anti-communism not excoriate its neighbor when it continued to interact with a communist country on both of their doorsteps?

Cold War Historiography: The United States, Mexico, and Holes in the Literature

For decades American scholars have studied the Cold War, and the already expansive literature continues to evolve. Historians have debated for decades on the origins of the Cold War, offering political, economic, and ideological reasonings for its inevitability. They have increasingly focused on the inseparable nature of foreign and domestic policy, leading to the upsurge in social history analyses that take the international context of the Cold War into account. This has produced studies that examine the effect that the war's rhetoric had on the Civil Rights Movement, blue collar workers, women, and other societal

groups. As scholars explore the dynamics of social history and its international context in more depth, political history has largely taken a secondary role in historians' studies of the Cold War.

The attention of Mexican political historians, on the other hand, has only recently begun to transition from the revolutionary era to the post-revolutionary period. Popular themes for analysis include the formation and limits of the modern Mexican state, the nature of political representation, the creation of political parties, the character of local and national elections, and the correlation between dissent and violence. In the context of the Cold War, the literature has centered on the presence of communists in Mexico, the nation's relationship with the Soviet Union, how the international context influenced domestic policies, and how the United States' foreign policy objectives limited the Mexican presidents' power.[9]

Neither group of scholars, however, has extensively examined why Mexico's unwillingness to match Washington's anti-communist fervor did not cause significant conflict between the two nations - especially given their geopolitical and economic proximity. In an effort to fill the aforementioned holes in the historiography, this paper utilizes a collection of declassified documents from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) alongside archives from the State Department to investigate why the United States did not chastise Mexico for sustaining relations with Cuba after the OAS Resolution of 1964. More broadly, this paper seeks to shift scholars' attention towards the relationship between the United States and Mexico, and how the Cold War impacted it. It first examines Mexico's domestic front, analyzing how the factious nature of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the personal interest of individual politicians shaped Washington policy makers' understanding of Mexico's relationship with Cuba. Afterwards, it evaluates the hemispheric impact of Mexico's decision to maintain relations with Cuba, noting the United States' concern with Cuba's utilization of Mexico as a base to export subversives to the Latin American mainland.

Ultimately, I argue, the United States decided to not reprimand Mexico for its decision to retain economic and diplomatic relations with Cuba because the bilateral relationship did not threaten to spread communism – not to Mexico or to other nations in Latin America. Washington bureaucrats recognized that Mexico's opposition to the OAS resolution originated from considerations on party stability and prioritization of personal interests. They understood Mexico's decision not as a direct affront to their ardent anticommunist agenda but as a continuance of traditional political behaviors. In understanding Mexico's characteristic political behaviors and respecting their deviation from the hemispheric foreign policy, the United States was able to strengthen the country's ability to combat communism within its borders. Mexico's relationship with Cuba not only posed a minimal threat of spreading communism, but it could actually have the power to prevent its dissemination. The United States, therefore, had minimal reason to chastise its neighbor, and rather had every reason to quietly support its decision.

Mexico's Domestic Front: The Protection of the PRI

Paradoxically, in allowing Mexico to retain its relationship with Cuba the United States strengthened Mexico's primary political party and its ability to resist communism. By 1964, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) had monopolized the political system of Mexico for nearly four decades. The CIA recognized that the party's subsumption of "groups ranging from the far left to the extreme right" allowed it to control "almost all elements of Mexican society" and break "the power of those it could not absorb."[10] They identified the PRI's broad coalition building, in other words, as the key electoral mechanism that allowed the political party to preserve its monopolistic power. To build stability between the ranging sectors within the party system, the outgoing president always chose his heir to prevent internal fights over succession, thus maintaining the party unity neces-

sary to emerge victorious at the polls. Additionally, the PRI did not tolerate any external challenge to its rule and quickly moved to suppress any opposition –from communists or otherwise. [11]

An overview of the PRI clearly indicates why a neighbor with a stable one party dictatorship provided great convenience for the United States. Not only did Washington not have to worry about an imminent communist threat on its border, but it also rested at ease knowing that one of the most influential countries in Latin America would not easily fall prey to communism. Hence, so long as the PRI retained their monopolistic power, the United States could trust that Mexico's foreign policy decisions would not result in an internal collapse to communism. When the end of his term approached in 1964, President Adolfo Lopez Mateos had to reconcile conflicting factions when selecting his successor, like all previous PRI presidents had done. Unlike his predecessors, however, Lopez Mateos had to cater to an additional interest - the United States and the Lyndon B. Johnson administration. Earlier in the year, Johnson had pressured the outgoing president to align Mexico more closely with American foreign policy, creating tension between the two nations. In a conversation between the two presidents in February of 1964, Lopez Mateos admitted that "a number of recent events had led his country to adopt certain international policies which had been interpreted by some people as anti-American."[12] Johnson, subtly pressuring Mexico into compliance, responded that "he was sure that when the chips were down Mexico would be on the side of the United States."[13]

From left to right: Presidents Truman, Johnson and Lopez-Mateos in a meeting in 1959
Source: Wikimedia commons, National Park Service

The primary goal of United States foreign policy since the beginning of the Cold War lay in impeding the expansion of communism. In the Western Hemisphere, American bureaucrats believed they would achieve this through the isolation of Cuba with OAS initiatives.[14] Utilizing the OAS to advance their goals had dominated the United States' hemispheric policy even before the Johnson Administration. Since 1960, before Castro had declared himself a communist, the State Department actively sought to "impress upon Latin American the nature and seriousness of Communist penetration of Cuba."[15] The United States repeatedly emphasized that the dangerous problem required preventative hemispheric action in the form of every member's severance of relations with the island.

The United States first formally attempted to achieve this objective by expelling Cuba from the OAS. But key nations - such as Argentina, Brazil and Mexico – opposed the measure. Consequently, the American delegation resorted to the bribing of right wing Central American dictators to secure the passage of the resolution. Washington officials, therefore, viewed the vote as an insincere and indifferent notion from Latin American countries to espouse its concerns with communism.[16]

To remedy this, Washington policy makers sought to use Venezuela's condemnation of Cuba's support for communist uprisings in its territory to emphasize the danger that Cuba's communist interventions posed. In doing so, they hoped to arouse the animosity needed to pass an OAS resolution that would force Latin American nations to suspend relations with Cuba. Shortly before Johnson's meeting with Lopez Mateos, internal deliberations in the State Department between Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Mann, OAS Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, Special Coordinator for Cuban Affairs John Crimmins, and others concluded that "while the Venezuelans should publicly lead the fight, we will have to give them plenty of support [through] an intensive selling job in Latin America."[17] Part of this "selling job," would include "making noise" about Cuba's intervention in Venezuela. But more importantly, the United States had to aid in the drafting of Venezuela's resolution. This resolution would condemn Cuba's interventionism and recommend that OAS members sever relations with the nation. By taking such an intimate role in the process, the United States aimed to ensure that the vote on the OAS resolution would result in the accomplishment of its most pressing objective in the Western Hemisphere - containing the spread of communism.[18] In light of these circumstances, Johnson - in his meeting with Lopez Mateos - alluded to the upcoming OAS vote. He characterized it as a time when the metaphorical chips would be put down, and made it clear the United States expected Mexico's loyal support in this critical time.

Mexico's Domestic Front: Factionalism in the PRI

As this unfolded on the international stage, Lopez Mateos selected Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, his Minister of the Interior, as his successor. Described as "severe in dealing with communist agitation during his tenure" by the Washington Daily

News, and as farther to the right than his predecessor by the CIA, the choice pleased the Johnson administration. Fulton Freeman, the American ambassador to Mexico, spoke approvingly of the reports that Diaz Ordaz would win.[19] When internal PRI opposition commented on this statement, upset at the prospect that the United States would aid their disfavored candidate, neither Secretary Mann nor President Johnson chastised Freeman for supporting the wrong candidate but rather advised him on how to manage the backlash from Mexican press.[20] The United States government, clearly approved of Lopez Mateos' selection and viewed Diaz Ordaz as a candidate who would continue the PRI's monopoly on Mexican politics. More importantly, Diaz Ordaz could potentially act more decisively against communist groups than his predecessor because of his political standing, which further ruled out any significant communist challenge in Mexico. [21]

This choice, however, did not please all factions of the PRI – the left wing members of the party, led by former president Lazaro Cardenas, opposed the nomination of Diaz Ordaz. In addition to their disapproval of Diaz Ordaz's stance on domestic policy issues, they also took issue with his endorsement of the OAS resolution, as they assumed the incoming administration would follow its predecessor's example.[22] Shortly before Mexico's presidential elections and the vote on the OAS resolution, Secretary Mann described his trouble with securing Mexico's vote in support for the resolution as stemming from this factious dispute. Mann informed Johnson that while Mexico's OAS ambassador Vicente Sanchez Gavito stood on their side, he was working arduously to "trying to keep the party from splitting" over the language of the OAS resolution right before the election.

As Sanchez Gavito participated in deliberations where he fiddled "with words that everybody [could] live with," members of the Johnson administration, including Assistant

for National Security Affairs McGeorge Bundy, acknowledged that the factious bickering could prevent the US from securing Mexico's vote.[23] The Johnson administration, in short, understood how the PRI's internal disputes affected Mexico's foreign policy decisions in the OAS and decided to not force Mexico to vote in favor of the resolution. In doing so, the Johnson administration chose to give Lopez Mateos the room he needed to work on keeping his party united – a decision that in the long term would benefit the United States as it would allow the PRI to retain its dominance.

The elections in Mexico resulted with Diaz Ordaz's victory, but they did not end the factious tensions in the PRI. The newly elected president had to take care to appease the leftist faction in order to keep the party intact. The Diaz Ordaz administration consequently chose to maintain Mexico's disapproval of the OAS resolution, specifically voicing objection to the resolution's "mandatory language" which obligated member countries dissolve their relations with Cuba.[24] Therefore, when put into context, Mexico's disapproval of the resolution indicates that one of the following two scenarios played out. Either inner party conflicts persisted in plaguing the PRI and Diaz Ordaz continued to negotiate with the leftist faction that initially opposed the resolution, or Diaz Ordaz sacrificed his own position on the resolution and opposed it to appease the leftist faction and keep the party united.

Presidents Diaz-Ordaz and Johnson
Source: Yoichi Okamoto via Wikimedia Commons

In an attempt to secure Mexico's vote and help the PRI leaders unite the party, the United States rewrote the language of the resolution on multiple occasions.[25] But in the end, it did not come as a surprise to the American delegation when Mexico voted against the resolution. As alluded to previously, Washington bureaucrats' restraint in exercising retaliatory measures against Mexico for its vote against the OAS resolution reflected their understanding of the internal conflicts of the PRI as well as the United States' own priorities in hemispheric policy. The Johnson administration primarily helped orchestrate the passage of the 1964 OAS resolution as a preventative measure to limit Cuba's ability to catalyze communist revolutions in the mainland of Latin America. When it came to achieving this goal in Mexico, however, the nation's affirmative vote on the resolution only supplied symbolic significance, whereas the continued control of the PRI provided practical protection. If Mexico's opposition to the OAS resolution, thus, was the cost of precluding factious disputes in the PRI from splitting the party and ending its monopoly, the United States was

willing to pay it in the name of the same goal that motivated it to support the OAS resolution in the first place: suppressing all potential for communist expansion in Latin America .

Mexico's Domestic Front: Personal Interests as the Ulterior Motive

The trajectory of corruption in Mexican politics in the decades leading up to the OAS vote in 1964 demonstrated that in addition to factious disputes, personal agendas also significantly shaped Mexico's foreign policy decisions. Public statements made by Mexican politicians on the OAS resolution offer a glimpse into this pattern. For instance, Sanchez Gavito reportedly "startled the New World diplomatic corps" at the OAS in arguing that "'the Mexican government may fall' if Mexico abandons its pro-Cuba policy."[26] Such an exaggerated statement undoubtedly served as a rhetorical strategy to justify Mexico's position and possibly garner sympathy from the other OAS ambassadors, as the economic policies of Mexico at the time clearly disprove the veracity of the statement. Mexico would significantly suffer from severing relations with Cuba if ending the relationship signified the loss of a significant source of critical imports or revenue from exports. Yet since the presidency of Manuel Avila Camacho in 1940, Mexico had adhered to the Import Substitution Industrialization Model (ISI). At the time of the presidency of Lopez Mateos, Mexico remained in the second phase of this plan; this second phase required the implementation of harsh tariffs to protect local industry from foreign competition and allowed domestic development to burgeon. Put simply, this meant that Mexico did *not* rely on Cuban imports.[27] Cuba, similarly, did not serve as a primary destination for Mexico's exports.[28]

Despite the lack of veracity of Sanchez Gavito's claims, the official actions of the Mexican government sup-

port the ambassador's suggestion that the Mexican government valued trade with the island. On two occasions, Mexico ignored the OAS's sanctions on Cuba – it first rejected the OAS resolution of June 1964 cutting all economic ties with the island and afterwards, it refused to sign the OAS sanctions adopted in July of 1964.[29] Mexico's reluctance to adopt the measures ratified by the OAS allowed the country, as a Mexican diplomat put it, to serve "as a window" to the state of Cuba.[30] As more accurately articulated by the *Christian Science Monitor*, Mexico served as a "gateway to Cuba – the only entry point through which people and cargo [could] get into Cuba from the Western Hemisphere on a regular basis."[31] Through this "gateway" role, Mexico facilitated the smuggling of contraband, serving as "a chief avenue through which machinery parts and other supplies desperately needed by Cuba" were smuggled from the United States. Mexico, moreover, served as a passageway for Soviet aid to reach the island. A Mexican company, for instance, reportedly "sold to the Soviet Union a million tons of sulphur which will be transferred to Cuba for use in that country's sugar refining industry."[32]

When taken together, these factors - Mexico's limited national economic exchanges with Cuba, the high rhetorical value Mexican officials placed on maintaining this relationship, the regular embezzlement of funds and the smuggling of goods to the island - suggest that PRI politicians potentially kept economic relations with Cuba to personally benefit from the profits generated by the illicit trade with the island. The high value Mexican politicians placed on trade with Cuba also insinuates that the commodities smuggled went beyond the machinery and sulphur mentioned by the newspaper articles. Smugglers likely transported other supplies critical to Cuba's survival sourced from within Mexico, such as oil, given the lucrative profits available. These profits would have substantially increased given that the OAS resolution hindered the is-

land's economic survival by demanding that the other members cut off economic ties with Cuba – the smugglers, therefore, would have held a near monopoly over trade with the island.

The relationship between PRI politicians of the late 20th century and smugglers parallels the relationship shared by the modern PRI and drug cartels. In both eras, politicians demonstrated a willingness to create political conditions favorable to the smugglers' transfers in return for a share of the profits. Greed and a desire for personal wealth, in other words, could have shaped Mexico's foreign policy decisions in regard to Cuba. One could argue that the close relationship between the PRI and smugglers does not parallel, but rather served as a precedent for the modern dynamic between the PRI and drug cartels. In allowing contrabandists to move goods through Mexico while disregarding international agreements, the administration of López Mateos paved the way for future PRI politicians and technocrats to accept agreements with drug cartels if it meant personal gain. The manipulation of the political context surrounding Cuba by PRI politicians adds yet another example of the enduring political party's corruption.

Even if individual PRI politicians did not have direct contact with smugglers, politicians did not need intimate connections to obtain profits from illicit commerce with Cuba. Corrupt PRI technocrats could have easily used their business connections at the time to obtain a share of the revenue made by Mexican companies, such as the ones that illegally sold sulphur to the island.[33] These new opportunities for revenue that Mexican companies found through their country's unique trading position with the island multiplied the opportunities for Mexican politicians to skim off the revenue that the government made from tariffs. PRI politicians, in short, had a vested personal interest in maintaining a source of revenue which was uncontested by the rest of the hemisphere and did not hesitate to use their governmental power to protect it.

The United States government recognized the personalist motivations of Mexican politicians and accepted this corruption as a mechanism that helped maintain the PRI's power.[34] Though no State Department memorandum explicitly articulated it, the foreign policy team of President Johnson could have arrived at this same conclusion from their familiarity with the inner workings of Mexican politics. Washington policy makers, in other words, inherently framed their reaction to Mexico's retainment of relations with Cuba with the knowledge of how personal interests influenced Mexican policy. In understanding this dynamic, Mexico's refusal to accept the OAS resolution played out not as intransigence against the United States' anticommunist agenda, but as a continuation of long standing relationships between politicians, Mexican companies, and smugglers. Therefore, the preservation of the bilateral relations between Mexico and Cuba presented no immediate affront to the United States' objective of preventing communist insurrections. Washington, consequently, had no pressing reason to reproach Mexico for its decision.

Hemispheric Scale: Securing the Mainland through Preventative Measures

While the Johnson administration worried about Mexico's internal collapse to communism, it fretted more over Cuba's potential to utilize Mexico as a base to launch its efforts to support communist uprisings in Latin America. The regular efforts of Cuban diplomats in Mexico to stimulate revolutionaries in Nicaragua in the years leading up to the Cuban Missile Crisis made this threat seem more imminent.[35] Acknowledgement of these activities affected the way in which members of the National Security Council participated in the drafting of Venezuela's OAS resolution. They emphasized the importance of cutting transportation between Cuba and mainland Latin

America to prevent Cuba from further instigating revolutionary efforts in the continent. Special Assistant for National Security Affairs Gordon Chase, for instance, supported the OAS resolution calling "for the suspension of all air and sea communications between Cuba and OAS countries," noting that such a measure would cut "the Cuba/Mexico airlink" and significantly hinder Cuba's ability to export subversives.[36] Mexico, as mentioned, did not vote in favor of this resolution, nor did it cut its air link to Cuba, which meant it could still act as a launch pad for Cuban subversives into the mainland of Latin America.

Despite American politicians' concern over Cuba's potential utilization of Mexico as a base to export communist guerillas, the political and diplomatic developments ensured that this threat was unlikely to materialize. Though Washington knew that the PRI would swiftly suppress any challenge to its rule, the more conservative character of the new Diaz Ordaz administration added additional assurance that any communist challenge would be quashed . William Raborn, Director of the CIA, in a memorandum on the security conditions in Mexico described the political course of Diaz Ordaz as "to the right of his predecessor," as he catered to the "moderate and conservative elements in the PRI [who] were exerting pressure to restrict the influence of Castroites, Communists, and other extremists."[37] Moreover, the same CIA memorandum on security conditions in Mexico noted that the administration had successfully "sharply limited pro-Castroite and other anti-US activities."[38] Mexico, in other words, would not serve as a fruitful base for Fidel Castro's efforts to export communist uprisings to the mainland of Latin America. The Diaz Ordaz administration – more than any of its predecessors – would subdue communist guerillas within Mexico's borders before they had a chance to spread their influence elsewhere in the mainland.

Aside from the heightened dedication of the Mexican government to crack down on any domestic or Cuban commu-

nist activities in its territory, the United States ensured that no Cuban effort to export revolutionaries would succeed by reinforcing the defenses of the rest of the continent. Not only did the United States succeed in limiting the possibility of Castro sending subversives to the mainland by orchestrating the ratification of the OAS resolution - it went a step further by increasing military and economic aid to the countries most vulnerable to a communist attack. After the Johnson administration realized that Mexico would not suspend its relations with Cuba after the ratification of the resolution, it shifted its focus to protecting the governments of Central America. While anticommunist dictators and parties controlled the governments of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua with aid from the United States, their rule was considerably less stable than that of the PRI's.[39] This fragility, alongside their geographical proximity to Mexico, made these countries more vulnerable targets if a Cuban communist excursion established itself in Mexico. Accordingly, the Johnson administration increased both military and economic aid to these countries to reinforce their ability to repress communist insurrections. From 1964 to 1965, individual aid increased by $3,297,000 to El Salvador, $2,732,000 to Guatemala, $3,742,000 to Honduras, and $17,982,000 to Nicaragua.[40] Additionally, less than a year after the OAS voted on requiring member nations to cease relations with Cuba, the United States helped to establish the Central American Defense Council, otherwise known as CONDECA. A mutual defense alliance, CONDECA ensured countries would come to the aid of any member troubled by communist insurgencies in their territory. Washington officials also provided anti-guerilla training to the militaries of these Central American countries with the goal of better preparing them to suppress any communist uprisings – especially those which sprouted from Cuban support.[41]

The United States, in other words, took preventative measures in Central America to minimize the influence

of Cuban communism through both stick and carrot measures. Increasing economic aid to these countries served as a carrot, allowing Washington to curb a rise in sympathy for communism among Central Americans by ameliorating the economic conditions of these countries. Fortifying the militaries of Central America with a larger budget and improved military training against communist insurgencies served as a stick, ensuring that the extant governments stood a better chance of defeating Cuban sympathizing subversives if they attempted to foment an uprising. Should Cuban subversives even succeed in leaving Mexico, the geographic areas most likely to become targets of their operations now stood better prepared to withstand their challenge. Because of the implementation of these safeguards, the United States did not overly concern itself with the prospect of a communist revolution carried out by Cuban subversives in Central America. Therefore, the Mexico-Cuba relationship posed a minimal threat of spreading communism to Latin America as a whole.

Conclusion

The United States did not reprimand Mexico for retaining its relationship with Cuba because their connection, contrary to initial appearances, furthered the United States' primary foreign policy goal: containing the spread of communism. In fact, the Mexico-Cuba relationship reduced factionalist debates, ensured the continued dominance of the PRI, and reduced the possibility that Mexico would fall to communism. Moreover, Washington diplomats likely considered the influence of the personal interests of politicians as a source of Mexico's foreign policy decisions. Mexico's relationship with Cuba provided lucrative opportunities that gave technocrats an incentive to remain in power. Taking these factors into consideration, the United States construed Mexico's connection with

Cuba not as an affront to their ardent anticommunist agenda, but rather as an indicator of the continued influence of individual interests within the Mexican system. Both Mexican and American policy makers, moreover, swiftly moved to preclude communist insurrections catalyzed by Cuban subversives – through harsher internal crack downs and the allocation of additional aid to Latin American countries with more vulnerable political systems, respectively. Any attempts from Cuba to utilize Mexico as a base to export communist revolutions into mainland Latin America, consequently, stood little chance of success. An analysis between the relationship between Mexico and Cuba, in conclusion, reveals that this connection would not spread communism to Mexico or any country in the Latin American mainland. Instead, it strengthened Mexico's ability to fight communism within its borders, which in turn prevented the spread of communism into the rest of Latin America. Requiring Mexico to abide by the OAS resolution would at best serve as a symbolic measure, and at worst, would damage Mexico's ability to fight communism. Allowing for Mexico to carry out an independent foreign policy decision, on the other hand, served as a practical measure which achieved the primary objective of Washington's foreign policy – preventing Cuba's communist agenda from contaminating the rest of the hemisphere. For these reasons, the United States had no reason to retaliate against its neighbor for sustaining relations with Cuba; rather, it had every reason to support its decision. On its own, Mexico fulfilled the guarantees that the United States sought from every other OAS member through the ratification of Venezuela's resolution. Through the steadfast domination of the PRI, Mexico proved to Washington that it would neither collapse to communism nor stimulate its surge in neighboring countries. In satisfying the principal goal of the United States – the suppression of all communist expansion – prior to the resolution, Mexico did not have to abide by

the course of action that Washington diplomats dictated. This enabled Mexico to retain a higher level of autonomy over its foreign policy than the rest of the OAS member nations. Indeed, as President Johnson expected, when all the chips were down Mexico was on the United States' side - but this did not occur primarily from a premeditated choice. Ultimately, both Mexico's trustworthiness and higher degree of international autonomy were unintended side effects of the one party dictatorship built around the PRI's greed and desire for power.

Notes

[1] National Security Council Report, NSC 68, "United States Objectives and Programs for National Security," April 14, 1950, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, US National Archives. http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116191.

[2] John H. Coatsworth, *The Clients and the Colossus: Central America and the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), pp. 50-55; Peter H. Smith, "Mexico since 1946: Dynamics of an Authoritarian Regime," in *Mexico Since Independence*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 51-52.

[3] Organization of American States, Ninth Meeting of Consultation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, "Final Act," (Washington D.C., United States: OAS, July 21-26, 1964), p. 312. http://www.oas.org/council/MEETINGS%20OF%20CONSULTATION/Actas/Acta%209.pdf.

[4] *Ibid*.

[5] Barnard L. Collier, "Noose for Cuba: American States Likely to Vote Trade Embargo," *Herald Tribune*, June 24, 1964, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp88-01315r000400130090-8.

[6] Peter H. Smith, "Mexico since 1946: Dynamics of an Authoritarian Regime," in *Mexico Since Independence*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 355; James Nelson Goodsell, "Mexico Holds Out for Link to Cuba," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 23, 1964, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp88-01315r000400130095-3.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] Washington did reduce economic and military aid to Mexico from $52,752,000 in 1964 when the OAS vote was in progress to $36,584,000 in 1965 after the vote. While the decrease in aid could have been a way for the United States to signal its discontent for Mexico's vote against the resolution, it is more likely that the United States adapted the amount of aid it gave to Mexico to its electoral panorama. Now that the elections had ended, the United States likely thought the Mexican government did not need as much money to secure its power. The aid given to Mexico in 1965 is even higher than, the $23,700,000 it received in 1963, the previous nonelection year. The rough comparability of these two amounts, therefore, suggests that the decrease in aid did not serve as a retaliatory measure.

[9] Ariel Rodríguez Kuri, "México: Guerra Fría e Historia Política," *Historia Mexicana* vo. 66, no. 2 (October-December: 2016): p. 646, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26470550?seq=1.

[10] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, *National Intelligence Estimate: Security Conditions in Mexico* (Washington D.C., April 7, 1966), p. 2, https:/www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/0000013601; U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, *Intelligence Memorandum: Mexico: Economic Progress and Problems* (Washington D.C., January 1, 1970), p. 3, https:/www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp85t00875r001600030008-0.

[11] Peter H. Smith, "Mexico since 1946: Dynamics of an Authoritarian Regime," in *Mexico Since Independence*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 355.

[12] U.S. Department of State, *Memorandum of Conversation between Presidents Johnson and Lopez-Mateos* (Palm Springs, California, February 21, 1964), p. 736, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d346.

[13] *Ibid*.

[14] U.S. Department of State, *Memorandum from the Secretary of State to the President*, by Christian A. Herter, (Washington D.C., April 23, 1960), p. 899, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d508; U.S. Department of State, National Security Council, *Draft Paper Prepared by Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff*, by Gordon Chase, Office of the Historian Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XXXI, South and Central America; Mexico (Washington D.C.: February 24, 1964),

[15] U.S. Department of State, *Memorandum from the Secretary of State to the President*, by Christian A. Herter, (Washington D.C., April 23, 1960), p. 899, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v06/d508.

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[19] Virginia Prewett, "Cuba-Mexico are Working a Double Play," *Washington Daily News*, April 27, 1964, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp88-01315r000400130098-0; U.S. Department of State, *Intelligence Memorandum: Mexico: Economic Progress and Problems* (Washington D.C.: January 1, 1970), p. 2, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp85t00875r001600030008-0.

[20] "Editorial Note," Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, American Republics, Volume XXXI, Department of State, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d347.

[21] Swift action mattered now more than ever as the United States worried about the communists "growing up in Mexicali" which according to Assistant Secretary Mann presented "a serious problem for us." U.S. Department of State, *Telephone Conversation between President Johnson and the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs* (Washington D.C.: June 11, 1964), p. 42, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d16.

[22] Virginia Prewett, "Cuba-Mexico are Working a Double Play," Washington Daily News, April 27, 1964, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp88-01315r000400130098-0; U.S. Department of State, *Telephone Conversation between President Johnson and the Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs* (Washington D.C.: June 11, 1964), p. 42, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d16.

[23] *Ibid*; U.S. Department of State, *Information Memorandum from the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs to President Johnson*, by McGeorge Bundy, Office of the Historian Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XXXI, South and Central America; Mexico (Washington D.C.: June 26, 1964), https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d19.

[24] U.S. Department of State, *Memorandum of Conversation* (Washington D.C.: July 25, 1964), p. 57, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d20.

[25] *Ibid*., pp. 57-58; U.S. Department of State, *Memorandum from Robert M. Sayre of the National Security Council Staff to the President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs*, by Robert M. Sayre, Office of the Historian, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XXXI, South and Central America; Mexico (Washington D.C.: July 23, 1964), p. 62, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d22.

[26] Peter H. Smith, "Mexico since 1946: Dynamics of an Authoritarian Regime," in *Mexico Since Independence*, ed. Leslie Bethell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 323-325.

[27] Smith, "Mexico since 1946," pp. 323-325; U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, *Intelligence Memorandum: Mexico: Economic Progress and Problems* (Washington D.C., January 1, 1970), p. 6, https:/www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp85t00875r001600030008-0.

[28] Smith, "Mexico since 1946."

[29] Dan Kurzman, "OAS Informally Approves Resolution to Cut Economic Ties with Cuba," *Washington Post and Times Herald*, June 25, 1964, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp88-01315r000400130088-1;
Tad Szulc "OAS States Sign Cuban Sanctions: US Hails Actions as 'Body Blow' To Castro Regime," *New York Times*, July 27, 1964, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp88-01315r000400130067-4.

[30] James Nelson Goodsell, "Mexico Holds Out for Link to Cuba," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 23, 1964, p. 1, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp88-01315r000400130095-3.

[31] *Ibid*., p. 1

[32] Virginia Prewett, "Cuba-Mexico are Working a Double Play," *Washington Daily News*, April 27, 1964, https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/cia-rdp88-01315r000400130098-0.

[33] Pervasive embezzlement, however, did characterize the Mexican economy at this time. Throughout the implementation of the ISI model, PRI politicians did not hesitate to embezzle from the government's revenue – whether to pay for political favors or add to their personal wealth. Politicians also regularly exploited their business connections, using their positions of political power to create conditions that would favor the businesses with which they had a personal affiliation in exchange for a larger share of their profits. Source: Smith, "Mexico since 1946," pp. 325-340.

[34] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, *National Intelligence Estimate: Security Conditions in Mexico* (Washington D.C., April 7, 1966), pp. 2-4, https:/www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/0000013601.

[35] Renata Keller, "The Latin American Missile Crisis," *Diplomatic History* vol. 39, no. 2 (April 2015): p. 200, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26376653; Manuel Rangel Escamilla, "Actividades de asilados polı´ticos nicaraguenses residentes en nuestro pai´s que en forma constante tratan de efectuar una conjura en contra del gobierno actual de la República de Nicaragua que preside el Gral. Anastasio Somoza," July 11, 1960, Dirección Federal de Seguridad, expediente (exp.) 11-56-60, legajo (leg.) 1, hoja 123, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City (hereafter AGN); Interview, September 22, 1960, Dirección Federal de Seguridad, exp. 76-3-60, leg. 1, exp. 229, AGN.

[36] U.S. Department of State, National Security Council, *Draft Paper Prepared by Gordon Chase of the National Security Council Staff*, by Gordon Chase, Office of the Historian Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964-1968, Volume XXXI, South and Central America; Mexico (Washington D.C.: February 24, 1964), https://history.state.gov/historical-documents/frus1964-68v31/d6.

[37] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, *National Intelligence Estimate: Security Conditions in Mexico* (Washington D.C., April 7, 1966), p. 2, https:/www.cia.gov/readingroom/document/0000013601.

[38] *Ibid,* p. 3.

[39] John H. Coatsworth, *The Clients and the Colossus: Central America and the United States* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994).

[40] "U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants (Greenbook) - July 1, 1945 – September 30, 2013," U.S. Agency for International Development, August 12, 2015, https://www.usaid.gov/open/greenbook/fy2013.

[41] Coatsworth, The Clients and the Colossus, pp. 107,188.

Images (in order of appearance):

National Park Service-US Department of the Interior, *Picture Shows Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson (Center), Former U.S. President Harry S. Truman (Left) and the President of Mexico Adolfo López Mateos (Right)*, in 1959., 1959, National Park Service [1], https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mateos.jpg.

Yoichi Okamoto, *President Lyndon B. Johnson Hosts the President of Mexico Gustavo Diaz Ordaz at His Texas Ranch*, November 10, 1964, November 10, 1964, LBJ Library, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LBJ_and_Diaz_Ordaz.jpg.